



## **“THE TEMPTRESS”: A JOURNEY SEDUCTIVE SPLENDOUR - EVENINGWEAR COLLECTION FOR SRI LANKAN WOMEN, INSPIRED BY ZOANTHIDS CORAL**

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This project presents “The Temptress”, a distinctive eveningwear collection for Sri Lankan ladies aged 18 to 25 years, inspired by the captivating forms and textures of Zoanthid coral (*Zoanthus* sp.). Drawing upon the organic intricacies of these marine organisms, the collection embraces the seductive beauty of women and translates it into fashion through the artisanal techniques of crochet and knotting, crafts rarely represented in high-end evening wear. Targeting style-conscious, empowered women from elite social segments, the collection aims to offer innovative, emotionally resonant, and aesthetically bold fashion alternatives. Consumer preferences were gathered via a structured Google form survey to guide design development, with colour palettes, silhouettes, and detailing curated based on this research. The collection integrates tactile textures that reflect the radial and layered patterns of Zoanthids, using threads and locally sourced cotton yarns to ensure both visual richness and cost-efficiency. It further addresses the gap in Sri Lanka’s fashion industry for original, high-quality eveningwear by encouraging a value chain that supports local craftsmanship and sustainable material sourcing. “The Temptress” explores a bold and sensual design narrative with the concept “A Journey into Seductive Splendour”, positioning crochet as a powerful, expressive medium in contemporary fashion and redefining the possibilities of a luxury evening wear collection through a culturally rooted and environmentally conscious lens.

*Keywords:* eveningwear, crochet, knotting, craftsmanship, Zoanthids coral

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Fashion is an expressive art form that involves cultural elements and personal preferences. While many advancements have been made worldwide, the Sri Lankan fashion industry still lacks the diversity to provide innovative and luxurious options for open-minded young females aged 18 to 25 when it comes to evening wear. This project seeks to solve this problem by developing an eveningwear collection for the Spring/Summer 2025/26 season inspired by Zoanthids (*Zoanthus sp.*) (Figure 01. a); an organism found on the ocean floor known for its vibrant colours and patterns and its poisonous nature. The dual qualities of Zoanthids, both seductive and dangerous, form the conceptual foundation of the collection, symbolising the bold and powerful essence of femininity.

The collection primarily features cotton macramé cord, utilising crochet and knotting techniques to develop textures and patterns that reflect the organic forms of Zoanthids. This artisanal approach allows for a seamless blend of handmade craftsmanship and modern fashion aesthetics, resulting in bold and edgy designs crafted for youthful, confident consumers.

The study aims to enrich the Sri Lankan eveningwear market by merging cultural craftsmanship with contemporary design. To achieve its aim, the study drew inspiration from Zoanthid coral, examined consumer preferences of Sri Lankan women aged 18 to 25, compared these with global luxury trends, experimented with crochet and knotting techniques, and ultimately created a six-outfit eveningwear collection blending artisanal craftsmanship with contemporary luxury.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a practice-based research approach combined with consumer-oriented analysis to inform the design and development of an innovative eveningwear collection. To understand the preferences of the target audience-fashion-forward women from upper-class social groups in Sri Lanka-purposeful sampling was employed to select 172 participants. Primary data were collected through an online questionnaire designed to assess consumer interests in colour schemes, silhouettes, garment styles, and design elements relevant to evening wear. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale and included both multiple-choice and open-ended questions to capture qualitative and quantitative insights.

Secondary research included a detailed trend analysis using WGSN, Vogue runway reviews, Pantone forecasts, and academic/industry reports to identify fabrics, colours, and patterns that aligned with global fashion trends while reflecting the collection's unique inspiration.

Concurrently, practical experiments were undertaken to explore how crochet and knotting techniques could be employed to mimic the layered, textural, and organic motifs of Zoanthids. Figure 1 presents the design process of the inspiration picture collection. Materials such as cotton yarns, threads, and velvet were tested to achieve both tactile richness and structural innovation in the final pieces.

By combining consumer research, trend forecasting, and studio experimentation, six evening garments were developed using a vibrant Zoanthid-inspired palette, merging natural inspiration with technical craft to present high-end, empowering eveningwear. Prototyping stages included sketch development, draping, material testing, and toiling to evaluate feasibility before final garment construction.

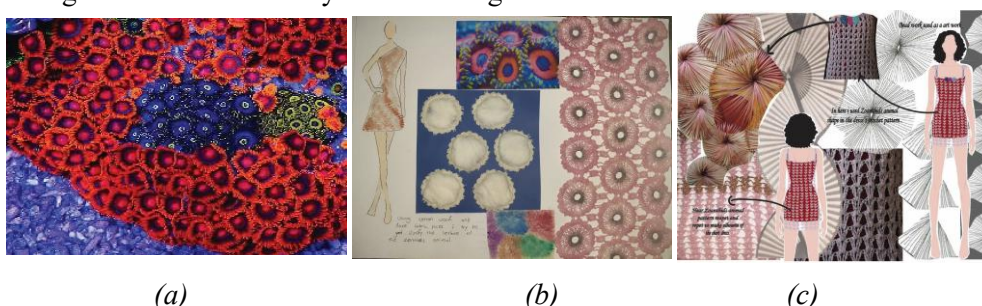


Figure 1: Inspiration & developments (a) *Zoanthid Coral*. (b) Concept & (c) Design developments.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

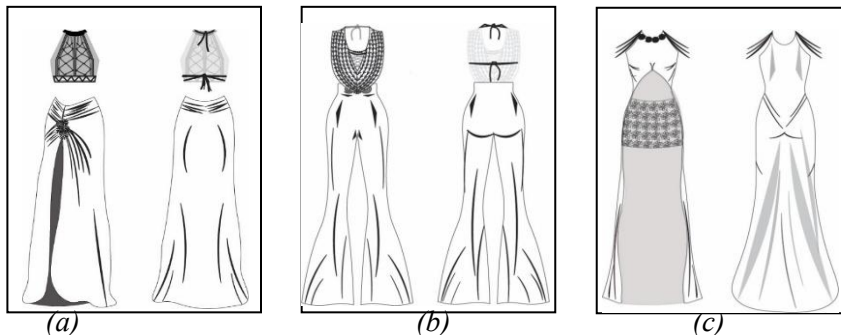
To ensure the collection met the preferences of the target market, an online survey was conducted with 172 young women aged 18 to 25 in Sri Lanka. The results revealed a strong preference for bold colours such as red, purple, and blue, aligning with the zoanthid-inspired palette. The respondents preferred evening wear that strikes a balance between modernity and individuality, as well as express an interest in garments with creative textures and embellishments.

A comparative analysis was conducted with global luxury designers such as Rodarte, Anna Kosturova, Eleanor Amoroso, and Isabel Marant. This highlighted that Sri Lankan consumers' interest in bold colours and textural depth aligns with international luxury fashion trends, yet there remains a market gap in local eveningwear offerings.

These findings guided key design choices in colour schemes, silhouettes, and materials, while trend analysis for Spring/Summer 2025/26 further shaped the creative direction. To guarantee both market relevance and creative uniqueness, the collection incorporated bold colours, organic patterns, and texture-rich materials, which were cited in industry reports as the prevailing trends. The design process incorporated traditional craftsmanship and modern techniques. Crochet and knotting were extensively employed to replicate the organic textures and patterns inspired by Zoanthids. Velvet and cotton macramé cord were chosen as primary materials for their ability to create depth and tactile richness. Drapery and fabric manipulation created flowing silhouettes with layered textures.



(a) (b)  
Figure 2: Fashion illustration of the final range of the collection (a) Front view (b) Back view.



(a) (b) (c)  
Figure 3: Front and back views of technical drawings of three designs in the fashion collection: (a) Look 3 in figure 3(c), (b) Look 4 in figure 3(d), and (c) Look 6 in figure 3(f).



(a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f)  
Figure 4: Live modelling of six outfits: Six final looks (a) to (f).

The final collection comprises six distinct outfits, including dresses, top-and-skirt combinations, and top-and-pants ensembles. Figure 2 indicates the final range of the collection, and Figure 3 presents technical drawings with front and back views of



three designs, highlighting intricate features such as decorative crochet panels, detailed knotting, and tailored silhouettes

Figure 4 illustrates the photographs of the finished garments on live models emphasising their fit, structure, and fine craftsmanship with crochet and knotting techniques used as accents on tops, skirts, and dresses. Each piece of garment exhibits a balance between striking and understated design elements. Construction methods included overlay and edge finishing to seamlessly integrate handcrafted details with the base fabrics. The final looks of the fashion collection (Figure 4) successfully reflect the sensual and dynamic qualities of Zoanthids while maintaining a contemporary and wearable appeal, aligning with the preferences of its intended audience and meeting its thematic and creative objectives.

## CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

This study demonstrates the potential of nature-inspired design, specifically the textures and patterns of Zoanthids, to create innovative eveningwear that balances tradition and modernity. The collection shows that Zoanthid-inspired design can create eveningwear that balances tradition with modernity, addressing a market gap for young Sri Lankan women. Consumer research ensured market relevance while adding academic and practical value. By demonstrating how unorthodox inspirations can encourage innovation and market appeal, these findings provide insightful information for the fashion industry. Additionally, this work contributes to local knowledge by promoting traditional techniques as tools for modern design, offering a foundation for both academic exploration and practical industry application in Sri Lanka.

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